

Partisan Defense Committee

27 June 2024

Hands off Arundhati Roy and Sheikh Showkat Hussain!

We must mobilize the broadest forces possible in India and around the world to protest the Modi government's prosecution of renowned author Arundhati Roy and Kashmiri human rights scholar Sheikh Showkat Hussain. On June 14, Delhi's Lieutenant Governor greenlighted their prosecution under the "anti-terror" Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), carrying a possible seven-year sentence.

The charges arise from their participation nearly **14 years ago** in a 2010 conference on Kashmir titled "Freedom—the Only Way." At the time Indian troops were brutally repressing Kashmiri protesters. Over 100 were killed, many were teenagers. Roy drew the ire of Hindu chauvinists simply for declaring that Kashmir "has never been an integral part of India."

Ever since, the government has been threatening to prosecute Roy and Hussain and others for their simple acts of free expression and protest in defense of Kashmiri national and democratic rights. It is an outrage that the charges are being revived. They are intended to chill political opposition to the Hindu-chauvinist BJP regime, whose prisons already are crowded with Muslim, leftist and human rights activists, languishing without trial.

The broadest possible forces must be mobilized in India and around the world to demand: ***Drop all charges against Roy and Hussain!*** Already there have been protests in India, and on June 21 an open letter was issued by over 200 Indian scholars and activists condemning the prosecution. The PDC has sent a protest letter to the Indian embassy in Washington, D.C. We have also signed the petition against the prosecution started by Concerned Citizens for Democracy at change.org. www.change.org/p/a-petition-to-condemn-the-government-and-its-persecution-of-arundhati-roy-and-sheikh-shauk.

We encourage you to do the same and to raise the call broadly in your unions, community, civil rights and left organizations, on the campuses and in the streets: ***Drop the charges! Down with the UAPA! Hands off Roy and Hussain!***

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The PDC is a class-struggle, non-sectarian legal and social defense organization which champions cases and causes in the interest of the whole of the working people. This purpose is in accordance with the political views of the Spartacist League.